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RANGOON:
AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION PRESS.
F. D. PHINNEY, SUPT.
1900.

JUDSON'S BURMESE BIBLE.

A brief history of the long correspondence of the British and Foreign Bible Society with the American Baptists in regard to Judson's Burmese version of the Bible, and of the culmination of that correspondence in the appointment of a Committee of its own to prepare a new text for publication, is due to the public. The Baptists were the only ones who were in any way willing to make a concession in order that Burma might not have rival versions of the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular.

The following Committee was appointed by the British and Foreign Bible Society in the rains of 1898 : Rev. Mr. Rickard, Anglican ; Rev. Mr. Bestall, Wesleyan ; Rev. Mr. Moir, for Greek, Presbyterian ; Rev. Mr. Schilling, Methodist Episcopal, should he return to Burma ; Mr. Stevenson, Deputy Commissioner ; Messrs. Ripley and Savage, and several native Christians. The Committee is overwhelmingly Anglican, for all the members of it, except the three non-conformist ministers, are of that church.

The action of the British and Foreign Bible Society is to be deeply regretted. Laudable as may be its desire to circulate the Scriptures in Burma, on the ground that Burma is a part of the British Empire, for which it feels a responsibility, it has done a grave injury to a large body of Christians by deliberately granting all demands of non-Baptists, after a diplomatic correspondence with the Baptists, in which it became evident that they were expected to make every

concession, because the Bishop of Rangoon and his friends declared from the beginning that their side could yield nothing. The manipulation of facts in some of the letters of the Secretaries of the Bible Society is very strange.

As we review the whole correspondence, we are forced to the opinion that the Baptists never had any real chance of justice. The one hope, arising from a suggestion of Rev. Dr. Wright that was accepted by the Baptists, was destroyed by the subsequent correspondence of Rev. Mr. Sharp, who apparently had no sympathy with Rev. Dr. Wright's suggestion. The non-Baptists evidently understood the drift of things. If they would only stand firm long enough for the outward decencies of correspondence, the British and Foreign Bible Society would grant all that they asked. It is this Society and not the Baptists who bring about the evils of two translations in Burma. The Burman Bible is the first to be subjected to change. But as was said at the time of the appointment of the Committee, the Karen Bible is to be taken up next.

Before entering upon a consideration of the action of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the preliminary statement should be made, that while the feeling of the Baptists towards the British and Foreign Bible Society is one of condemnation, only kindly feeling exists toward Bishop Strachan and the non-Baptists who have rallied about him. Bishop Strachan has the same right to conscientious views and the conscientious expression of them that Baptists claim. Neither party has the right to call the other unfair or bigoted, for each party makes its stand out of loyalty to what it thinks is truth. When Bishop Strachan says that, "remembering the solemn promise made by him at his consecration," he cannot accept certain proposals, no one will be more ready to honor

his conscientious convictions than the Baptists, that "austere sect," which ecclesiastically stands so much by itself from its loyalty to its views of truth. Let there be mutual charity.

But the Baptists feel that they have good cause to be grieved and offended by the course taken by the British and Foreign Bible Society. A brief resume of the history of the correspondence will show this. June 4th, 1886, the Bishop of Rangoon wrote Rev. Mr. Kidd, Hon. Secretary, Burma Bible and Tract Society, saying :

> "I am anxious to know whether :—
>
> 1st.—The American Baptist Missionary Union will give their consent to the printing of a new edition of Judson's version of the New Testament in Burmese, substituting in the text when the word occurs, transliterated Greek words or neutral equivalents.
>
> 2nd.—In event of such consent being given, will the Burma Bible and Tract Society undertake to publish the new edition ?
>
> 3rd.—In event of such consent being withheld, will the Burma Bible and Tract Society undertake to bring out a new translation of the New Testament in Burmese ?"

On Aug. 3rd, 1886, the Committee of the Burma Bible and Tract Society passed two resolutions, of which one was as follows :

> "That the Baptists in Burma have no authority to allow any alterations in Mr. Judson's Burmese translation of the Holy Scriptures, and any request for such permission must be addressed directly to the American Baptist Missionary Union Board."

Meanwhile the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society entered into correspondence with both the Bishop and Rev. Mr. Kidd, with reference to such alterations as those proposed by the Bishop. A further communication

from the Bible Society to Rev. Dr. Murdock, Foreign Secretary A. B. M. Union, led to a distinct refusal of the request, which could be regarded only as a complete surrender of the version by the Baptists. The letter of Dr. Murdock was an elaborate statement of the views of the Baptists. The copy sent by Rev. Dr. Murdock to the Bible House in London never reached its destination, though he was unaware of the fact until long after. After waiting a long time and receiving no acknowledgement from London, he published the letter in the "Baptist Missionary Magazine" for July, 1887. The Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, labouring under the impression that Rev. Dr. Murdock had not sent any answer to London, and had taken the "Baptist Missionary Magazine" as the medium of his reply, was pleased to characterize it as "a hostile and discourteous refusal of our request." The request of the British and Foreign Bible Society involved a surrender of Judson's version to a radical change by the elimination of the translation of "baptizo" and its cognates, and the substitution of a neutral word or a translation of the terms.

When Baptists, truly loyal to their principles, are called on to surrender without condition, their answer is always clear and unmistakable. It is no unusual thing to have their answer characterized as "hostile and discourteous." Had the Baptists asked the British and Foreign Bible Society to remove every neutral word or transliteration of "baptizo" from any of its versions and replace them by "immerse" and "immersion," and had the Society refused, as with its views it would have naturally done in clear and unmistakable words, would it have been a Christian grace for the Baptists to have called the answer of the Society "hostile" or "discourteous?"

From the correspondence of Bishop Strachan published in "The Rangoon Diocesan Quarterly" of Jan., 1899, we learn that on March 2nd, 1888, the Bishop wrote to the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society as follows:

> "Since my return to Burma I have been very busy, but I have not overlooked the important subject discussed in my presence by your Committee when I was in England. I have consulted several gentlemen of experience and who are interested in missionary work. I find the general verdict to be a feeling of satisfaction with Dr. Judson's version, but that it is capable of improvement if a revision be undertaken by competent hands. I can have this done, but the work of careful revision requires time; so, I should be glad if your Committee would consider whether it would be advisable to publish in the meantime portions of the New Testament, making the few necessary alterations in the existing version—the Gospels might be the first issued.
>
> I confess, I still feel, notwithstanding the powerful remarks of the gentleman who presided at the meeting of the Committee at which I was present, some lingering disinclination to take the Baptist version and adapt it to our own use. Still your Committee spoke so strongly as to there being no copy-right, and so, no legal obstacle; and as to there being no violation as to any moral rights the Baptist Board might have, that I shall be willing to be guided by your Committee. If they think they can and ought to publish such an edition to help during the time occupied in a new revision I shall be happy to help in any way I can."

To this a reply was received, dated April 19th, 1888:

> "The Committee had before them your esteemed letter of March 1st, with reference to the supply of Burmese Scriptures, and they have come to the conclusion that you be encouraged to proceed with the work, and that you be requested to send tenders for printing. The simplest

and best way will be simply to transliterate the word for "baptize," and as that will occupy but a very short time you will be able to get estimates at once, which you will kindly forward to this house. We all deeply regret that we cannot go forward in this work with the cordial approval of those whose names have been so long honorably associated with Judson's version, but under the circumstances and for the present distress there is nothing left to us, but to proceed in the proposed manner."

The Bishop seems to have known a considerable time before the Baptists did, the decision of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society in view of the refusal of the Baptists to make a full surrender of their translation. The first that the Baptists themselves knew of it was from a paragraph on page 442 of the Annual Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for 1889 :

"Burma. The Right Rev. Bishop Strachan has been authorized by the Committee to bring out an edition of Judson's New Testament, with the few changes needed to bring the version into harmony with the Society's rules. Judson's version is considered good, but capable of improvement, and a strong representative Revision Committee of Burmese Scholars is being got together to undertake an improved version of the New Testament."

At the Annual Conference of Baptist Missionaries held near the close of 1889, a vigorous protest was prepared and February 11th, 1890, was forwarded to Dr. Wright:

* * * The Missionaries most solemnly protest,

I. Against the proposed changes in Judson's translation of the New Testament or similar changes in translations prepared by us in other languages of Burma for the purpose of bringing them into harmony with the rules of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

II. Against any revision of Judson's Burmese translation of the New Testament which ignores the rights of the American Baptist Missionary Union by being undertaken independently of it and in a spirit hostile to it. Such action would be contrary to the spirit of mission commity so strongly emphasized in the recent meeting of the Centennial Missionary Conference held in London.

III. Because the appearance of rival versions in Burma would promote unseemly divisions among the native Christians, and would give an occasion for great reproach to the name of Christ among the heathen, and be a positive hindrance to the advance of Christ's kingdom in the land.

IV. Because it is a grievous wrong to our mission, which had sole possession of this field for fifty years as a pioneer Mission, to substitute a transliteration of the term which has never been shown by scholars to be incorrect, while the version as a whole has received the high commendation of all Burman scholars of every denomination. All this is seen by the correspondence between the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Executive Committee of the American Baptist Missionary Union in Boston, U. S. A., published in the Baptist Missionary Magazine of July 1887.

When the Baptists thought this action "hostile," the British and Foreign Bible Society repudiated the term as vigourously as they had used it with reference to the reply of Rev. Dr. Murdock in the Baptist Missionary Magazine.

To this protest Rev. Mr. Sharp replied in a letter dated August 9th, 1890, which was also printed later in a pamphlet of twelve octavo pages, and was entitled "Correspondence with Burma." We have room for only the most important portions. The opening pages explain why he answers the letter instead of Rev. Dr. Wright, to whom the protest of the Missionaries was addressed. He then goes on to say :

"In answer to the protest you endorsed, let me first on the behalf of our Committee, assure you and your co-signatories that nothing is farther from their mind than to act in a spirit 'hostile' to the American Baptist Missionary Union. On the contrary, there is no Christian body for which they have endeavoured to show more kindly consideration than they have for the Baptist body as a whole. The contributions of our Society for many years towards the production of the version at Serampore were on the most lavish scale, and reached a larger sum than has ever yet been announced. And though, when contiguous Missions of other Christian bodies sprung up in India, the catholic constitution of this Society and the sources from which its money comes, compelled it to refuse to spend its funds in printing purely denominational terms, there has been no withdrawal of sympathy from Baptists and their Mission. The Society's assistance in every other form has always been at their service."

He then enlarges on the help rendered to the Baptists of England and India, and especially to the Englist Baptist Missionary Society, and states :

"The Baptist Mission Presses print for this Society versions in Sanskrit, Bengali, and Hindi, 'with alterations' to avoid denominational terms in a few verses. By the large number of copies printed at the same time for this Society, with only a few trifling alterations, the cost of a smaller edition for the Bible Translation Society is reduced, and valuable employment is given to the Presses. This help has been gratefully acknowledged."

He then refers to Burma and says :

"In the same spirit, though it has not been open to us to do so on the same scale, our Committee have from time to time made grants in books, money and paper towards supplying, printing, and circulating the Scriptures in Burma. Many grateful acknowledgements in time past have been received from the late Rev. Cephas Bennett. And if I am mistaken in thinking that the

American Baptist Missionary Society has received aid in printing the Scriptures in Burmese and Sgaw-Karen, its Missions have been indirectly assisted by what we have done for the Burma Bible and Tract Society."

He then takes up the relation of the American Baptists to the Telugu version and says :

"In further proof that the action of the British and Foreign Bible Society has been inspired by no 'hostile' spirit towards either Baptists in general or American Baptists in particular, let me refer to the endeavours our Committee made to meet the wishes of Baptist Missionaries in respect to the Telugu version in Southern India."

Two and a half pages are spent on this subject in which the action of the American Baptists in regard to the Telugu version is stigmatized as a violation of comity among missions, as great as that alleged of the British and Foreign Bible Society by the Baptists of Burma. The case is summed up in paragraph 13 of the letter :

"The above will show the spirit in which our Committees, in successive years, endeavoured to avoid what your enclosure justly deprecates as the 'appearance of rival versions,' in the Telugu field of Southern India. The London Missionary Society, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Church Missionary Society preceded the Baptist Missions from America in different parts of the country. How has the translation of the Scriptures into Telugu, provided by the British and Foreign Bible Society through its Madras Auxiliary, been treated ? To put it very briefly, the Rev. Dr. Jewett and another were obliged, by orders from America to withdraw from the Bible Society's Telugu New Testament Revision Committee, and a separate revision of the Madras Auxiliary's book was undertaken under the auspicies of the American Baptist Missionary Union. No permission, we believe, to appropriate the existing

version was sought, but by funds from America the Telugu New Testament has been issued, in appearance just resembling the Bible Society's book and with only a few alterations, giving it a strong denominational colouring. The rival book has been circulated among the same Telugu people, among whom the older one, with its catholic renderings, was current."

The last part of the pamphlet is occupied with an argument to show that there is no wrong done to an old mission by introducing a transliteration of "baptizo," where a translation of the term had been long in use.

To this letter the following reply was sent by the Conference of Baptist Missionaries in Burma in the last of 1890:

"1. Your answer to our charge of 'ignoring mission comity and the rights of the American Baptist Missionary Union' by saying that our missionaries among the Telugus were guilty of a similar appropriation of your version of the Telugu New Testament as stated in paragraphs 13 and 14, is no justification of your course in regard to Judson's version. For, granting that your statement in regard to the Telugu version is perfectly correct, wrong done by one party never justifies the perpetration of a similar wrong by the other party. Two wrongs cannot make a right.

"We, however, respectfully call your attention to the fact that there is a material discrepancy between your statement of the case and that which we have received from Telugu Baptist Missionaries who participated in the discussions at the time. From the following letter of Rev. Dr. Downie* it will be seen that the Telugu Missionaries sought and were given to understand that they had honourably obtained permission to make such

* The whole matter has been gone into in detail by Dr. Downie, in a published pamphlet entitled "Bible Revision among the Telugus. A reply to Correspondence with Burma."

subsequent changes as they saw fit in the version which they conjointly with their pedobaptist brethren were engaged in producing, if, when completed, the version was not acceptable to them as Baptists.

"Dr. Downie says:—'As to the Bible question, the pamphlet (paragraphs 12-13) does not at all represent the facts correctly, so far as they relate to our Mission. In the first place it is not correct to represent that our objection to the Madras Auxiliary Bible Society's version was simply the word for baptism. Our first and chief objection was that it inverted the Commission, making 'baptizing' the first thing, and 'make disciples' the last step in the process. Our second objection was wrong prepositions for 'in,' 'into,' 'out of,' &c., in connection with baptism. The third objection was the word for baptism.

"In writing paragraph 13, I cannot escape the conviction that Mr. Sharp has not received all the facts. I know that the M. A. B. S. has sometimes failed to send the parent Society portions of its proceedings as the rule requires. In 1873, at Rajahmundry, where the M. A. B. S. Revision Committee sat, Dr. Jewett was asked to leave the Old Testament work and unite in the New Testament revision, as the latter was urgent. He demurred on the ground that he would differ from some of the Committee on certain passages. On this account an agreement was proposed by Dr. Chamberlain, Chairman of the Revision Committee, that Dr. Jewett should go on as far as he could with them and when the time came for publication, if the version was not acceptable to Baptists, they would be at liberty to make such changes as they saw fit and publish their own editions at their own expense. Dr. Chamberlain laid this before the M. A. B. S. and he reported to Dr. Jewett that it was agreed to. When in 1881, we proposed to get out our own version, Dr. Jewett sent a letter to the M. A. B. S. reminding them of this agreement and informing them that as an edition of the New Testament had been published which we could not accept, we proposed to get

out one of our own, using the one then in existence as far as we saw fit according to agreement and by virtue of our right as part owners with them. This raised a storm in the Committee. A sub-Committee was appointed to investigate and report. This sub-Committee denied the existence of the agreement, because no record of it could be found. Dr. Jewett and I were present and heard this denial. I called on the Chairman to ask Dr. Chamberlain whether such an agreement had not been made. Dr. Chamberlain arose and said 'Yes, such an agreement was made and the reason why it was not recorded, was because we feared it might raise discussion, if not opposition in the parent Society, if we sent the proceedings home.' This meeting took place in the Bible House, Madras, January 24th, 1881. No decision was reached and the meeting was adjourned to the 27th. The Sub-Committee insisted on passing a resolution condemning the course of the Baptists, and, in spite of Dr. Chamberlain's statement, still denying the existence of the agreement. A warm discussion ensued and finally a resolution was passed to the effect that no further action should be taken till the Baptist Missions were again consulted. This was Thursday, January 27th, 1881. Yet on Saturday the 29th Dr. Chamberlain and the Secretary of the M. A. B. S. went to the Registrar of Books' office for the purpose of copyrighting their version in order to prevent the publication of ours. But this could not be done, as the time had elapsed, the law being that it must be done within a month of publication.

"2. Although the legal copyright of Judson's version has expired, we consider that the moral right of the producers of that version remains intact and should be respected in a Christian manner.

"3. In view of what we understand to be the ordinary policy of the British and Foreign Bible Society, namely, to publish and circulate the old and established versions of the Scriptures in any language, we feel that justice and consistency demand that the same policy should be pursued in regard to the Bible in Burma,

especially as Judson's version has been the only version in circulation for about fifty years.

"4. Furthermore, we do not see why Baptists should always be required to yield to the demands of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the matter of their versions of Scripture. The British and Foreign Bible Society has intimated in your letter that it is ready to put in the margin, 'namely, some translate immerse.' We think that the British and Foreign Bible Society should be willing to respect the text of our old and established versions, and if it desires to introduce the transliteration of "baptizo" into any edition of Judson's versions, it should leave the text intact and insert such transliteration in the margin and thus grant unto us the same courtesy which it asks of us."

The American Baptists could not help looking on the action of the Bible Society as "hostile." They could not follow the English Baptists in the surrender of versions and receive the same meed of praise, though the complacent agreement of the English Baptists to the principles of the "catholic constitution" of the Bible Society was repeatedly held up for their admiration and following. Everyone must stand or fall to his own conscience. The American Baptists felt that it was wrong to change the translation and therefore their claims for consideration were to be summarily put aside by the resolution of the Bible Society. If a man steps into one's pathway and demands one's property, it is usually looked upon as a hostile act. The Baptists thought that the action of the British and Foreign Bible Society had something of a similar spirit of hostility in it. It would require some casuistry to make such action seem friendly. Thus ended the first stage of the proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society with regard to the Burman Bible, an effort to secure a surrender of their translation by Baptists,

met by a frank, firm, and courteous refusal. It was supposed that the end had come.

But soon after a second stage of proceedings began which for a time awakened glad hope in the Baptists that the evil of rival versions might be avoided, an evil that they view with the greatest pain and strongst deprecation. A suggestion had been made by some one that the transliteration of "baptizo" should be placed in the margin and the text of Dr. Judson be left undisturbed. This suggestion was favourably considered by the Baptists and at last accepted by them. In May, 1891, while passing through London, Rev. Dr. Cushing had the pleasure in company of Rev. Mr. Armstrong, of meeting Dr. Wright, Mr. Sharp, and a section of the Bible Society's Committee at the Bible House. The discussion was very kindly in tone. Dr. Wright proposed that instead of placing the transliteration in the margin as the Baptists had already agreed, it should be inserted in brackets in the text immediately after the translation. The reason assigned at the time was that non-Baptists objected to the transliteration in the margin as it might be easily overlooked. The insertion in brackets in the text after the translation would give it due prominence. This suggestion was designed to be a final permanent solution of the difficulty. It was accepted by Rev. Dr. Cushing and Rev. Mr. Armstrong, so far as they were concerned, and Rev. Dr. Cushing agreed to place the matter before the Executive Committee of the A. B. M. Union on his arrival in Boston, U. S. A., a fortnight later. At the same time the impression was given to Rev. Dr. Cushing and Rev. Mr. Armstrong that non-Baptists would be very unreasonable if they declined the arrangement by which each party could read whichever form it should desire. On arriving in Boston, Rev. Dr. Cushing

met the Executive Committee and placed the matter before them. It was unanimously voted to approve of the arrangement in the hope of preventing rival versions. On returning to London early in June, he conveyed the decision of the Executive Committee to Rev. Dr. Wright.

From the published correspondence of Bishop Strachan, we learn that the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society wrote to the Bishop July 3rd, 1891, making the proposal to leave the Burman words for "immersion" and "immerse," etc., in the text, but follow them in the text in each place with the corresponding Greek word transliterated and placed in brackets.

This led to considerable correspondence and discussion. On July 3rd, 1891, the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society wrote :

> "The Committee wish me to report the result of several discussions they have had chiefly in the Editorial Sub-Committee on the very important question of producing one Burmese Bible for use in all the Missions in Burma. They have felt that the evils are so very great—in every way—from the circulation of two versions of the Holy Scriptures in the same Mission field, that no pains on their part ought to be spared to avert such a calamity in Missions in Burma, with the untoward obstacle that is presented to the progress of Christianity, where it can be presented to the heathen that Christians themselves are partisans of conflicting revelations. * * * Whatever others may feel, we in the catholic constitution of the British and Foreign Bible Society are bound to show the tenderest consideration we can for these Baptist brethren in trying to lead things on to a version which all can use. * * * The proposal is this—to leave the Burmese words for "immersion," "immerse, etc.," in the text, but follow them in the text in each place with the corresponding Greek word transliterated and placed in brackets. We have had several interviews with the

Rev. Dr. Cushing, the Rev. Mr. Armstrong and the Rev. Dr. Bunker—the selected representatives of the American Baptist Burmese Mission. They feel that any introduction of a new word is tantamount to a confession on their part of having been in an error hitherto in their rendering of the Word of God. It is therefore a large concession on their part, they feel, to agree to the above proposal. But in a most friendly and Christian spirit they have accepted it."

This proposal the Bishop did not see his way to accept. In his reply he says :

"The proposition of the British and Foreign Bible Society now is—"to have the Burmese words for 'immerse,' 'immersion, etc.,' in the text, but (to) follow them in the text in each place with the corresponding Greek word transliterated and placed in brackets," and you inform me that the authorities of the Baptist Missions have agreed to this concession. You call it a 'large concession.' I confess it does not strike me as being a large concession. It is indeed a concession on the part of Baptists, but if accepted by us becomes a compromise on our part. Compromises both in morals and theology are confessedly dangerous and unsatisfactory. Knowing and feeling this, still, I am prepared to go a long way towards securing the advantage of having one uniform translation of the Holy Scriptures into Burmese which all sections of Christians might use.

But remembering the solemn promises made by me at my consecration, and after careful and prayerful consideration, I feel that I ought not to accept the proposal now made. For what would be the natural inference if the words 'immersion,' 'immerse,' etc., were invariably followed by the transliterated Greek words in brackets ? Would it not be that 'immersion,' immerse,' etc., are the right, the only true reading of the Greek ? that the Greek has this only one rendering ? It seems to me that an alternative marginal rendering would be preferable to this."

In passing it may be said that Burmans are accustomed to insert a Pali or other foreign word in the text before a translation, and the meaning of the two words is supposed to be identical. But the insertion of a foreign word in the text in brackets after a translation is an anomaly in Burman composition, and would have the signification which those who introduced it gave. The anomalous placing of the foreign word in brackets in the text after the translation or in the margin, which is equally anomalous, was never regarded by the Baptists as of the same character as the customary placing of a foreign word before a translation in the text. It was with astonishment that the Baptists heard towards the close of the correspondence with the British and Foreign Bible Society, that the acceptance of the proposal to place the foreign word in brackets after the translation was regarded by them as a sharp piece of strategy on their part. No Baptist had ever hinted such an idea.

It seems a pity, if the Bishop could not accept the transliterated word in brackets in the text, that he could not have accepted the transliteration in the margin, where the idea of identity of meaning would certainly have been shadowy and the transliteration would stand in the circumstances as a silent interrogation of the translation in the text. We have not the least doubt, however, that the Bishop acted in conscientious obedience to his conviction when, in consultation with S. P. G. Missionaries and other non-Baptist ministers, he gave his casting vote with the S. P. G. Missionaries against the proposal that the other non-Baptists were ready to accept, and communicated his position to the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Let us return to the narrative. The "concession of the Baptists" remained under consideration for some time.

This letter was communicated to the Reverend Missionaries of the S. P. G., Wesleyan and Episcopal Methodist Missions, and to the Presbyterian Minister, being Honorary Secretary of the Burma Bible and Tract Society. All the S. P. G. Missionaries pointed out grave and practical difficulties in the way of accepting the proposal. The Wesleyan Missionary, while regretting that the Baptists cannot agree to a "version of the Bible in which a more catholic interpretation shall be given to passages relating to Christian Baptism" thinks that the so-called compromise is a crumb, and is of opinion it is well under present circumstances to eat it. The Episcopal Methodist Missionary heartily approves of the proposal: and the Presbyterian Minister thinks that the compromise suggested might do as a temporary measure.

"On May 7th, 1892, the Bishop wrote:

> "I gather from your letter of April 15th, that your Committee have considered my letter of February 2nd, and do not feel able to fall in with the suggestions it contains. * * the American Baptist Missionaries in Burma, too, feel unable to fall in with my suggestions. I shall therefore take steps with as little delay as possible to introduce an edition in Burmese of the New Testament which Missionaries, other than those of the Baptist persuasion, may conscientiously use."

Before the close of 1892, in order to show their sincere willingness to further arrangements for publishing a common New Testament according to the proposal made, the A. B. M. Union offered the use of their plates for printing a tentative edition, changes being made in such plates as were necessary. This offer seemed to be pleasing to those who were in London.

On January 27th, 1893, the Rev. Mr. Sharp wrote a letter in which he urged the acceptance of the proposal that had been made about the insertion of the transliteration in the

text, in which there was a hint that after a tentative edition had been published according to the proposal, the offending translation might be dropped out in subsequent editions.

These significant remarks were made :

> "It's very awkwardness may attract all the speedier notice for the new word and accelerate its incorporation with Burmese. Then the cumbrous scaffolding can be dispensed with."

Again, in speaking of two other versions with reference to which a similar arrangement had been made, it was said :

> "It will be understood that this plan is a stepping-stone to a future simplification when the Greek words shall have become familiar in the two vernaculars."

This was a new and unexpected turn of affairs. The Baptists were surprised. Consultations were held and as the result a letter was written to Rev. Dr. Duncan, Secretary, A. B. M. Union, March, 1893 :

> "Hitherto we have been willing to go as far as we have gone in concession. But this was with the understanding that the concession would end there and that the arrangement by which the transliteration of "baptizo" would remain permanently in brackets and the text contain the translation also, was to be a perpetual one. From this letter to the Bishop you will see that the present step towards obtaining one Bible by the use of the transliteration of "baptizo" in the brackets is only a preliminary to the removal of the translation from the text entirely. This we object to most strongly. * * * Will it not be well to stop here and inquire of the British and Foreign Society what its intention for the future is ? When we consented to the concession in Burma, we expected that the arrangement would be a permanent one, and not a "stepping-stone" to our utter overthrow."

The suggestion that after a while only the transliteration should remain in the text was never made to the Baptists by the Secretary British and Foreign Bible Society. They would not have known it, had not the Bishop very kindly sent his letter for the perusal and consideration of the Baptist Missionaries. The suggestion was deemed as falling little short of a breaking of faith with them by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Naturally it put the Baptists on their guard with reference to what the future might bring forth. They could only think that it was very unfair and of doubtful honesty to urge upon non-Baptists something contrary to what they understood from the first that the Bible Society understood, namely, that the arrangement, if made, was a permanent thing.

On July 20th, 1893, Bishop Strachan wrote to the British and Foreign Bible Society a strong refusal to accept the Baptists' concession, gave notice of his application to the S. P. C. K. in London (a Society under the control of High Church Anglicans) for help in issuing a new version of the New Testament, and made the following proposal :

> "If instead of publishing a new edition of Judson's New Testament our Baptist friends would delegate two or three to sit on the Revision Committee, there might be one version for all sects. It would be necessary as a prior matter to determine what should be used by (a) Baptists, (b) all others for 'baptise' and its cognates. Having agreed to this the combined committee could proceed to revise the different books."

The Bible Society, acting on the suggestion of Bishop Strachan, without any consultation with the Baptists, who had evinced their great desire to do all that they could to make a common version possible, passed the following resolution :

> "That, provided the Lord Bishop of Rangoon can form a Revision Committee in which representatives of the American Baptists take part, and one version can be adopted by Churchmen and Nonconformists throughout Burma, the Committee would be ready to bear the expense of preparing and publishing this version."

This Resolution was never sent by the Secretary British and Foreign Bible Society to the Baptists, neither was there any communication to the Baptists that the Bible Society had ceased to consider the "concession" over which there had been correspondence for two years. The Resolution was courteously made known to the Baptists by the Bishop in a letter dated September 18th, 1895. But one cannot help seeing a significance in the fact that no communication came directly to the Baptists. The Bible Society did not wish the S. P. C. K. to engage in Bible work in Burma, as that would interfere with the idea that prevails at the Bible House, that the Bible Society has an essentially prescriptive right to do all the Bible work in the British Empire. This right could not be foregone. The Bishop would not consent to the "concession" though it should be recognized in only one or two tentative versions and the "cumbrous scaffolding" were afterwards dispensed with. Nothing more could be obtained from the Baptists, and moreover they were now aware that even if their concession were acted upon, it would not be with the understanding which they had, that it would be permanent in the form which they had agreed to. The resolution in answer to the Bishop's proposal, the Bible Society well knew, was really a return to the demand made of the Baptists during the first stage of correspondence already noted. For the Bishop had a "prior matter to be determined" on which there could be no agreement unless the Baptists would entirely surrender their translation of "baptizo" for a special

edition of the New Testament for the use of non-Baptists. The Bishop, as has been previously mentioned, had written July, 20th :

> "I quite think the Baptists have gone as far in the way of concession as can be expected. With every desire to fall in with the suggestions of the Bible Society I have reluctantly come to the decision that it is our duty, in humble reliance on the help of God the Holy Spirit, to enter upon the work of revision, and to issue a new version of the New Testament in Burmese. I have accordingly written to the S. P. C. K. in London asking for the help of that venerable Society in carrying out this great undertaking.
>
> "If instead of publishing a new edition of Judson's New Testament our Baptist friends would delegate two or three to sit on the revision Committee, then there might be one version for all sects. It would be necessary as a prior matter to determine, what should be used by (a) Baptists, (b) all others for "baptise" and its cognates. Having agreed to this, the combined Committee could proceed to revise the different books."

This would be to agree to what would produce two essentially rival versions. In view of these things the following Resolution was passed by the Baptist Missionary Conference at Rangoon, October, 1895, and forwarded to the Bishop :

> "Resolved—that we, the Conference of Baptist Missionaries assembled in Rangoon, regret that we do not feel able to unite in any Committee of Revision of the Burman New Testament, which would contemplate any departure from the translation of the term "baptizo" and its cognates now used in Judson's version."

At the same time the following letter was drafted by order of the Committee and sent "directly" to Rev. Mr. Sharp, Secretary British and Foreign Bible Society :

"The Bishop of Rangoon has sent to our Annual Conference your letter of August 14th 1895, with a letter of his own, asking whether a Committee formed of Baptists, Churchmen and others, could meet together and agree on the terms to be used for "baptise" and its cognates by (a) Baptists, (b) all others, and having settled these terms, proceed in the general revision of the New Testament.

"We are pained to note the following expression in your letter: 'If the Baptists refuse all reasonable considerations such as Christian principles claim of us for them, we must regretfully act without them in the best way we can.' We beg to remind you of the concessions that we have made in the interests of a union version:

"First, when it was proposed to place in the margin of Judson's New Testament, 'some translate immerse' and the word 'some' was objected to, we agreed to the insertion of 'Greek, baptize' in the margin. Second, when it was objected that putting the transliteration in the margin was not sufficiently conspicuous, Dr. Wright, Secretary British and Foreign Bible Society, in an interview which two representatives of the Conference had with him and a portion of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London in 1891, proposed for our acceptance what he and the members present regarded as so reasonable, that if it were but accepted by us, it would be such a simple solution of the difficulty that the other party to the controversy would probably not refuse to agree to it. That proposition was, as you know, to allow the insertion of the transliteration within brackets in the body of the text immediately after the translation of the word wherever it occurred. Our Conference of missionaries and the Executive Committee of our Society in America signified to Dr. Wright their acceptance of the proposals made by Dr. Wright in behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society. We have been assured by you that all these years since, you have been labouring to secure the agreement of the Bishop of Rangoon to this proposal

made by your Society and accepted by us. We confess therefore to great surprise at your statement, implying as it does, that we and not he have been or are refusing all 'reasonable considerations such as Christian principles claim.' We cannot but feel that we have made all reasonable consessions, which have, however, met with no response from the other party in the controversy. We cannot understand the grave imputation in regard to us in your letter, for we believe that by our concessions already made, we have met 'all reasonable considerations such as Christian principles claim.'

"We regret that if you had any criticisms to make regarding what has already been done by us or any proposals involving us, you did not make them directly to our Conference and not through the representative of another denomination. Our position as by far the largest and oldest Protestant Christian body in the country should secure us this courtesy.

"We beg leave to forward herewith a copy of a Resolution passed by our Annual Conference now in session in Rangoon, which has been sent to the Bishop of Rangoon in reply to his letter already referred to.

"None can regret and deprecate more deeply than we do any prospect of having rival versions of the Scriptures scattered abroad in Burma, especially where one version has been so long used, and that this should be done by a Society to which Baptists in common with other Christian bodies contribute. But we feel that after having done what we have to prevent it, the responsibility must rest on others."

This letter was never answered, and as the British and Foreign Bible Society had assumed the responsibility of a rival version, it was supposed that the end of the Bible matter had come so far as the Baptists were concerned. The close of this second stage of the correspondence left the Bible Society making the same demand of the Baptists as at the end of the first stage of correspondence. Only the Bible

Society had at last determined to make a rival version, because for its own reasons, it would neither place the transliteration of "baptize" in the margin, nor insert in brackets in the text.

But on February 3rd, 1896, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society passed a Resolution in view of the Resolution of the Baptist Conference which the Conference had sent to Bishop Strachan and had in turn been forwarded by him to London. This Resolution was communicated to the Baptists as well as to the Bishop, though no notice was taken of the letter of the Baptists in which they had stated their grievance at the summary way in which the Bible Society had acted without any notification that their offers were given up. The Resolution was :

> "The Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society very much regret to learn from the Resolution of the Baptist Conference in Burma (as communicated by Dr. Cushing to Bishop Strachan in his letter of 26th October, 1895) that there seems no longer any hope of the early formation of a joint Board of Baptist and non-Baptist revisers to prepare such an edition of Judson's Burmese Bible as would be acceptable for common use in all missions in Burma. At the same time they feel that the production of an edition which can be used in the non-Baptist Missions ought not to be longer deferred."
>
> "In a letter dated London, June 23, 1892, the Rev. Mr. Armstrong and Mr. F. D. Phinney of Rangoon most kindly assured the Committee that they had sufficient reasons for believing that, if the British and Foreign Bible Society undertook the publication of Dr. Judson's Bible, with the simple addition within brackets of the Greek words for "baptize," etc., transliterated in Burmese characters and treated as native words, the American Baptist Mission Union would be ready to facilitate the preparation of plates for its use. The Committee acknowledge with pleasure the various ways in which

Baptists in Burma and America have been ready to accept proposals made by this Society so far as they conscientiously could, and they would have been glad if the plan contemplated in 1892 had proved generally acceptable on the other side. But non-Baptist Burmese scholars hold that in Burmese, usage does not admit of parentheses, and that when two renderings stand in juxtaposition they can only be understood as equivalents.

"In these circumstances, and to reduce the divergencies between two current versions of the Burmese Bible to a minimum, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society ask the acquiescence of the Executive Committee of the American Baptist Missionary Union in Boston and its Missionaries in Burma in their bringing out an edition of Dr. Judson's Bible with no other alterations from the current copies than the correction of any obvious and acknowledged mistakes and the substitution of the Greek terms transliterated and inflected as vernacular words for those now used to represent "baptize" and its cognates. In making this request, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society think that contributions of their Society in the past towards the printing of Burmese Scriptures make it not altogether unreasonable, and that the generous way in which similar proposals respecting the Bengali New Testament and others were met in 1834-35 by Baptist Missionaries in India and have since been met in England give them good grounds for hoping to be met in a like spirit on this occasion in America and Burma."

It seemed very strange to the Baptists after the long and unfortunately unsuccessful correspondence that the British and Foreign Bible Society should again make its original proposal which the Baptists had repeatedly and courteously stated that they could not accept. It seemed to be an attempt to throw off the odium of a measure which the British and Foreign Bible Society had already determined to take whether the Baptists were willing or not. It was virtually saying,

you have indeed made a concession, though the other party has not. We wish you now to say God-speed to the other party and waive your convictions as you have nothing further to expect, for we have determined to accede to the wishes of the other party that has refused your concession and has also firmly refused to make any concession. Baptists could have but one opinion of this course.

A reply was sent by the Baptist Conference which was held in October, 1896. This paper for the most part restates the facts enumerated in the paper of 1895, and then closes with the following :

> " We cannot agree to any such change as you propose so far as any moral right of ours is recognized. More than that, we feel it our solemn duty to protest against any such treatment of our Burman version. We do this,
>
> " First, because we think that our concessions should have produced a result more just and in accordance with Christian comity than the decision to abandon our version to the full change which the non-Baptists demand of you. We believe that Christian law and courtesy required more kindly treatment than this on your part.
>
> Second, we protest also because Burma is predominantly a Baptist mission field and has been so from the first establishment of the mission by Judson in 1813, and Judson's version has always been the only Burman version and is used not only by Burman Christians, but also by a great number of Karen Christians.
>
> Third, we protest because you require of us what is directly inconsistant with the spirit of one of the Society's own rules, namely, ' The Committee recommend that care should be taken to translate uniformly as far as possible all Scripture names and terms as (a), the Divine names and attributes, etc.,' a rule which is being pressed to the embarassment of the revisers of the Hindi Bible by your requiring them to translate the name

Jehovah by Prabhu or Paraneshwar, while they greatly desire that the term be transliterated instead.

"Fourth, we protest, above all, against this proposed action on your part, because we have no authority to change in any way what we believe to be an integral part of Christ's teaching, and thus mutilate the beautiful and perfect symbolism of this ordinance of baptism, and thereby fail to give the fulness of Christ's teaching.

"The concurrent highest Greek scholarship of the Christian world is outspoken in its affirmation that our view of the meaning of "baptizo" is correct and that immersion was the practice of the primitive church.

"We note that you very highly commend our English Baptist brethren in Bengal for consenting to your request about the Bengali New Testament. While we hold them in greatest respect, we are responsible only for our own action. We are personally bound to follow what we believe to be the truth taught by Christ."

The Baptists had lost all hope of any impartial action on the part of the British and Foreign Bible Society. That they were not mistaken in their convictions was seen when in October 1897, the following Resolutions were passed by the Bible Society's Committee :

"The Committee having considered the fact that the conditions under which the Ningpo and other Chinese versions are being produced have proved acceptable both to Baptists and non-Baptists in China—that is to say, the plan of producing Union versions which the Baptists and others should be at liberty to reprint with their own terms for 'baptize.'

"Resolved, that a revised version of the Burmese Bible be prepared, the Baptist Missionaries being invited to take part in the version, on the understanding that they be at liberty to reprint the revised version with the alteration only of the term for baptism and its cognates.

"Resolved, that a revision Committee be formed, consisting of representatives of the Church of England,

Wesleyan Methodists, Episcopal Methodists, and Baptists, with the assistance of native and other scholars, and with power to add to their number, and the Bishop of Rangoon be convener."

January 5th 1898, Rev. Dr. Wright wrote a long letter in forwarding the above Resolutions to the Baptists of Burma, in which he says :

"These resolutions I think give us a last hope of acting in concert. You may be aware that the Delegates Bible in China was brought out on the condition that all evangelical bodies in the country would be at liberty to publish editions of it, changing only the words for "God" "Spirit," and "baptize." When I went out to the China Conference I urged on the brethren there to unite in a union version in High Wenli, Low Wenli, and Mandarin which should be the same in substance in each of these languages. I was met by Baptist friends, some of them men of great learning, energy, and experience. There was danger in the Conference of our not being able to take these most excellent men with us, but our proposal was formulated in such a way as to give liberty to the Baptist friends to use the version with their own terms. I think that I may say that the success of my mission to the Shanghai Conference was largely due to the enthusiastic and skilful support of Dr. William Ashmore and other able Baptists who joined heartily with us in the Conference.

"Since then a difficulty arose on a proposal to revise and reprint the Ningpo vernacular version, and there was danger of the breaking up of the spirit of unity in the mission. But our Agent, Mr. Bondfield of Shanghai, went up to Ningpo, met the Baptists and the other missionaries there, and the result was that the Rev. J. R. Goddard, of the American Baptist Missionary Union, and the Rev. J. C. Hoare (son of the late Canon Hoare) of the Church Missionary Society, united in the work of revision and, aided by native scholars, brought the New Testament to a successful conclusion. Mr.

Goddard is, I think that I may say, the best scholar in the language. The version was prepared on the same conditions as regards the terms for "God," "Spirit," and "baptize," as were agreed upon for the Union Versions of the Shanghai Conference, and the result will be one Bible, the same in form and substance, with the exception of a few terms altered by our Baptist friends. There will not only in that result be the blessing to the missions and their workers of a united Bible, with a few exceptional matters easily understood by everybody, but there will be this additional advantage that there will be a great saving of Christian money in the production of the version. One set of electroplates can be made, say for the Bible Society, then duplicate electros can be taken in hand by our Baptist friends and by chiselling out of neutral terms for "baptize" and its cognates, the Baptists will be able to insert their own terms and have their own Bible without all the labour and cost of setting up the book themselves.

"This I am sure you will see is an advantage not to be overlooked. Of course it may be said that circumstances are different in Burma. In China it is a version prepared at the expense of the Bible Society that is being adapted to the uses of Baptists. In Burma it would be a Baptist version that will be revised and prepared for the uses of non-Baptists. But the difference I think is an argument in favour of what we propose, because the Bible Society is only asking you to do for others what it is doing for the Baptists.

"Now my dear Dr. Cushing, I need not say anything of the friendly feeling in our Society towards your great and noble mission, nor of the anxious desire on our part to do anything possible to honour the great name of Judson, nor need I refer to what you know already, my own high esteem and kind feeling towards you and your colleagues. And I only trust that I am not projecting our good will too far in hoping that you will personally, nobly forgetting the past, join us as your colleagues in China have already done.

"I feel almost absolutely certain that if I were with the men in America I know I could prevail upon them to join with us in this matter. If you feel that you have been not over generously treated in the past that is a still greater reason for you with the Gospel you teach to show your own large generosity and for the good of the great and growing cause in Burma, put your shoulders to the wheel, set apart your best men for the work, join heartily in it and make the first effort not only a triumphant success but also an example in the mission-fields of forbearance, courteous appreciation and brotherly love. (Signed) W. WRIGHT.

After receiving the letter of Dr. Wright, Rev. Dr. Cushing wrote to Drs. Ashmore and Goddard making inquiry about what took place in China. Doubtless they will not object to the publication of the important paragraphs of their letters.

Dr. Ashmore says :

"I do not think China's action furnishes a guide for the Bible Society, at all, in your case. The circumstances were these :

At the Shanghai Conference there was a natural and proper desire to secure unanimity, as much as possible. This showed itself in the desire to get a revision of the Bible, with as much harmony as circumstances would admit. There were several translations already in use. Could these be blended in one revision ?

It was a question which at the first did not concern us Baptists at all. The discussion was among the other denominations, while we looked on. And it was long, varied and fervid, almost heated. The difficulties crystalized around the terms to be used for "God" and "Spirit" in translation. For instance, we have those who use "Shang Ti" for God, and those who use "Shin." The divergence has been the occasion of a "thirty years war," and fear was that it might be stirred up again. A compromise was agreed upon. It was agreed that revisers should be taken from those holding the two views,

each his own, and that the revisers should leave "blank spaces" for the names of God and Spirit and let each side fill in its own term when the printing came to be done. According to this neither side could be said to be "altering the work of the other,"—a very important point. To this they agreed, and it was the only way out of the difficulty.

They then expressed the desire to have us Baptists join in—we had held aloof—but we said that if they would agree to let the word baptize be in the category with God and Spirit, we could consistently join, but not otherwise. * * * At present they all use the word "washing-rite." A few were willing to allow a transliteration. We declined. We did not believe in transliterating a word that could and ought to be translated. * * * More of them were willing to allow us to put in the margin, "Some translate immerse." That also we refused. We would not be sidetracked while others took the main road. We never would consent to such a thing. Finally they agreed as above, though there was considerable ill feeling on the part of some, of "conceding too much to a handful of Baptists." I myself was especially determined to fall in with no offer to allow us to ALTER this word. That would have been used to injure our work. And so they passed the following resolutions :

RESOLVED, That the Ex. Com. ask in the name of the Conference the concurrence and financial help of the Bible Societies of Great Britain and America in carrying forward this work ; and that, when completed, it be the common property of the Societies which have given their patronage to the work, each having the right to publish such editions as it may choose, and with such terms for God, Spirit and baptism, as may be called for, and also to add explanatory headings, pages, chapters, and sectional headings, and such other accessories as it might deem expedient.

And later—That in the New Testament (revision) the Delegate Version be taken as a basis and that the

Bridgeman Cullotson version and Dr. Goddard's version be also employed whenever available.

And accordingly Baptists agreed to serve on the Committee and Dr. Graves was put on to represent us on a Revision Committee. And there the matter stands to-day. We are waiting to see the trend of things but we are by no means committed, any of us, to discard or lay on the shelf our own Goddard's version of the New Testament ; and my own opinion is that we will continue to use it even though the other is made according to agreement.

I do not see that our position should hamper you at all. The cases are not at all parallel. They were revising their own versions of which they have several, and we were asked to come in and join them in seeing if a new version could be practicable. If it suits us, we would use it, if not, we would adhere to our own. Only we had no Old Testament.

If a proposition had been made to us to allow them to take Goddard's version and change the word for baptism, we should have fought it to the death. A thing of this kind is what they have done with you. If they had had a half a dozen versions of their own in use for forty years, and had come to you to propose a joint work of revising the whole Bible, allowing you to share in the benefits of the work of a dozen of their good scholars and promising that they would not interfere with your word for baptism and would not ask you to lend any sort of indorsement to their word, then there would be something of a parallel. * * * You do well to stand like a wall of granite. The fight over the baptismal term in Asia is in reality just coming on. * * *

You must know that the new Revised Versions of the Shanghai Conference are not the only ones being made. There are three others, -- one by an ex-American Episcopal bishop ; one by Dr. John, which will have the support of the Scottish Bible Society ; and one by Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Shaub, a German Lutheran. The

remarkable thing about Chalmers' version is, that it uses not our term, indeed, for baptism but another word which also means to dip! This new translation is already out, and makes a fine show in our favor. Thus,—'In those days came John the Dipper.' Chalmers is in the London Mission, the successor of Dr. Legge.

You will have no controversy with us. We will stand by you and back you up with vehemence."

Dr. Goddard writes:

"I think that Dr. Wright has given only a partial or one-sided account of what was done in China. I know nothing about the enthusiastic and skilful support of Dr. Ashmore at the conference, but I do know that the Baptists generally were by no means enthusiastic for a union version. My position was that if the Bible Societies would print an edition with our terms for God, Spirit and baptism, I would be willing for the sake of the benefits to be gained by having one version, to accept the revised version, provided in other respects it was equal to the one we are now using which was translated by my father and revised by Dr. Lord. In the report of the Committee on Revision, the last article recommends that 'when completed it be the common property of the Societies which have given their patronage to the work, each having the right to publish such editions as it may choose, and with such terms for God, Spirit and baptize as may be called for." As I understand it the Baptists gave no pledge to adopt or use the Revised Version, when completed, unless these terms are complied with,—and how much hope there is of their printing a version for us, with our translation of baptizo, you can judge from your own experience, as well as from what follows.

In regard to what took place in Ningpo; there were two Pedobaptist and our Baptist versions of the New Testament in the colloquial. All three were exhausted at nearly the same time The Pedobaptists were hope-

lessly divided on their two versions, Mr. Hoare and his mission insisting on the later one which he had revised, while all the others desired the old version, Mr. Hoare's version is the better translation, but was objectionable because it was too stiff and not sufficiently colloquial. Mr. Bondfield came to try and adjust matters. I need not go into details, but on my suggestion they agreed to put Mr. Hoare's version into the hands of a Chinese Committee to correct the style, and have a foreign committee to see that any changes that the native committee made did not depart from the meaning of the original Greek. As it happened, the only missionaries in Ningpo who were qualified for that work at that time, were Mr. Hoare and myself; the others were new comers with one exception. As an inducement Mr. Bondfield told me the B. & F. Bible Society would print an edition with our terms for baptism, etc. I told him that it would be impossible under their constitution; but he referred to the Shanghai Conference's resolutions and said that he was certain that they would print an edition for us on the same terms as for the others! I was engaged in the revision of our own version, and thought that the suggestions of the Chinese Committee might be helpful to me in that work. So finally I consented to serve on the Committee with Mr. Hoare and five Chinese preachers with the distinct understanding that neither the mission nor myself were by that act committed to use the resulting version. I found after a time that the version was in some respects superior to our own, and after consultation with the mission it was decided to adopt it with our own terms for baptism. Then came the hitch. Dr. Wright wrote that the B. & F. Bible Society could not print a denominational Bible, whereat I resisted, and told him that was just the Bible he was printing. Well, the upshot of it all was we were allowed to print an edition with our own terms, we paying for the paper, printing, binding etc., but in consideration of the work I had done, we were not charged for the type-setting; our

edition being printed after their's had been worked off, when the necessary changes were made in the type. It has cost them not a cent, while by my work and revising, reading proof, etc. I have saved the Missionary Union the expense of setting up the type of a new edition, which we had to have.

I have gone into this matter in some detail that you may understand our position.

Our circumstances are quite different from yours and I can appreciate the difficulty of your position. You have fought a good fight; may you have wisdom and grace and all needed help in fighting it out to the end."

In closing, attention is called to three points in the correspondence which are worth consideration:

1. The proposition of Rev. Mr. Sharp to Bishop Strachan, made without the knowledge of the Baptists, that a tentative edition of the New Testament should be published with the transliteration in brackets after the translation in the text, and that the "cumbrous scaffolding" should disappear in subsequent editions, though he knew that the Baptists were only willing to enter upon the arrangement if it were to be a permanent one.

2. The statement of Dr. Wright in his letter of January 6th 1898:—

> "From your point of view you were quite right in saying that the Baptists made the only concessions that were made towards the proposed agreements. It was, I believe, promptly answered by the statement that the concessions were all in favour of the Baptist Society and therefore that while they agreed to the compromise all was in their own favour."

(a) Neither Dr. Wright nor Mr. Sharp promptly answered that the concession was all in favour of the Baptists, but the latter made the concession a basis of correspondence with non-Baptists for nearly two years.

(b) We were never told that "the compromise was all in our own favour." If such a statement came in non-Baptist letters to the Bible Society's Committee, we were never informed of it. Nor did any non-Baptists say it to any Baptist so far as we are aware.

3. The statements in Dr. Wright's letter in regard to the relations of Drs. Ashmore and Goddard to the Chinese versions. Copies of Dr. Wright's letter were sent to Drs. Ashmore and Goddard with a request for information. The replies of Drs. Ashmore and Goddard are printed above. The contents of their letters diverge very much from the statement made by Dr. Wright.

This is the result of the long correspondence concerning the Burman Bible extending over more than a decade of years. When Baptists consider that they accepted, first, the suggestion of placing the transliteration in the margin, and later, the suggestion of Rev. Dr. Wright to place the transliteration in brackects in the text after the translation, and that the other party stood firmly by its position refusing to make any concession ; and when Baptists note as a consequence that instead of placing the transliteration in the margin, at least so that anyone could read according to his own choice and thus make a common version, the Bible Society's Committee determined to give way to the full demand of the non-Baptists, they feel that it was an act of great injustice to them as a Christian body which had shown itself anxious to make a way for a common version.

From the course of events, it does not seem too strong to say, that Baptists were expected to make a full concession of all that non-Baptists demanded. Those who make a concession are fully entitled to consideration in a final decision although their opponents belittle their concession.

The die is cast, and two versions are a certainty in the future. Would that it had been at least agreed to have the transliteration placed in the margin and thus secure one New Testament for all Christians in Burma.

The responsibility that it is not so lies with the British and Foreign Bible Society.

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